

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY: NEA:EGABINGTON

APPROVED BY: NEA:EGABINGTON

S/S:MR ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 098028

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 3532 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 21 APR

QTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3532

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: FRANGIE DIGS IN

1. TODAY'S PRESS GIVES FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT FRANGIE IS BACKING OFF HIS PROMISE TO SIGN THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, WHICH HAS OF COURSE CAUSED A FUROR IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN PRESS. IN ADDITION TO THE ANSWERS PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR DAHDAH TOLD US THREE DAYS AGO HE FRANGIE WANTED FROM THE SYRIANS, FRANGIE IS NOW REPORTEDLY TALKING ABOUT THE NEED TO RETURN TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT BAABDA AND FOR THE CEASEFIRE TO BE "ABSOLUTE" FOR A PERIOD OF TEN DAYS BEFORE HE ACTS.

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2. ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE FRANGIE ASSURED ME HE WOULD RESIGN AND THEY HAVE JUST ABOUT DESTROYED HOPE ON THE OTHER SIDE THAT CHANGE CAN TAKE PLACE BY CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. WHAT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE REALIZED BY THE RIGHT IS THAT FRANGIE'S INTRANSIGENCE IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF THE LACK OF SECURITY, AND SO A VICIOUS CIRCLE IS CREATED.

3. OF ITSELF FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION WOULD HARDLY BE A CURE-ALL, BUT IT IS A PREREQUISITE FOR A BREATHING SPACE IN WHICH IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, FAILURE TO RESIGN WOULD ALMOST INEVITABLY LEAD TO FURTHER DETERIORATION AND PERHAPS TO THE "INTERNATIONALIZATION" OF THE CRISIS WHICH MANY ON THE RIGHT ARE DETERMINED TO ACHIEVE EVEN IF THEY HAVE TO DESTROY THE COUNTRY COMPLETELY TO DO SO.

4. I REALIZE THAT I AM UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ASSURING THE CHRISTIANS THAT WE ARE INTERSTED IN PROTECTING THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS. I WONDER IF THE TIME HAS NOT COME HOWEVER TO INFORM FRANGIE IN A MORE BLUNT WAY THAT HE SHOULD SIGN THE AMENDMENT FORTHWITH AND RESIGN AS SOON AS A NEW PRESIDENT IS ELECTED. A POLITE BUT FIRM MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT TO THIS EFFECT COULD TIP THE BALANCE. BROWN UNQTE KISSINGER

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